

Birding Ecotours



INDIA: ANDAMAN ISLANDS ENDEMIC

23 - 27 JANUARY 2023

22 - 26 JANUARY 2024



*We will look for the gorgeous endemic Andaman Woodpecker during this tour
(photo M. Aggarwal).*

This short (five day) birdwatching trip will focus on the endemic birds found on the Andaman Islands, part of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands archipelago. We will be based on South Andaman Island during the tour which is situated approximately 1,100 kilometers (c. 680 miles) to the east of the Indian subcontinent. Although a union territory of and governed by India, the archipelago is actually geographically closer to Myanmar (formerly Burma), which is approximately 400 kilometers (c. 250 miles) to the north and approximately 700 kilometers (c. 435 miles) to the east. Sumatra (part of Indonesia) is approximately 500 kilometers (310 miles) to the south. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are surrounded by the Bay of Bengal to the west and the Andaman Sea to the east.

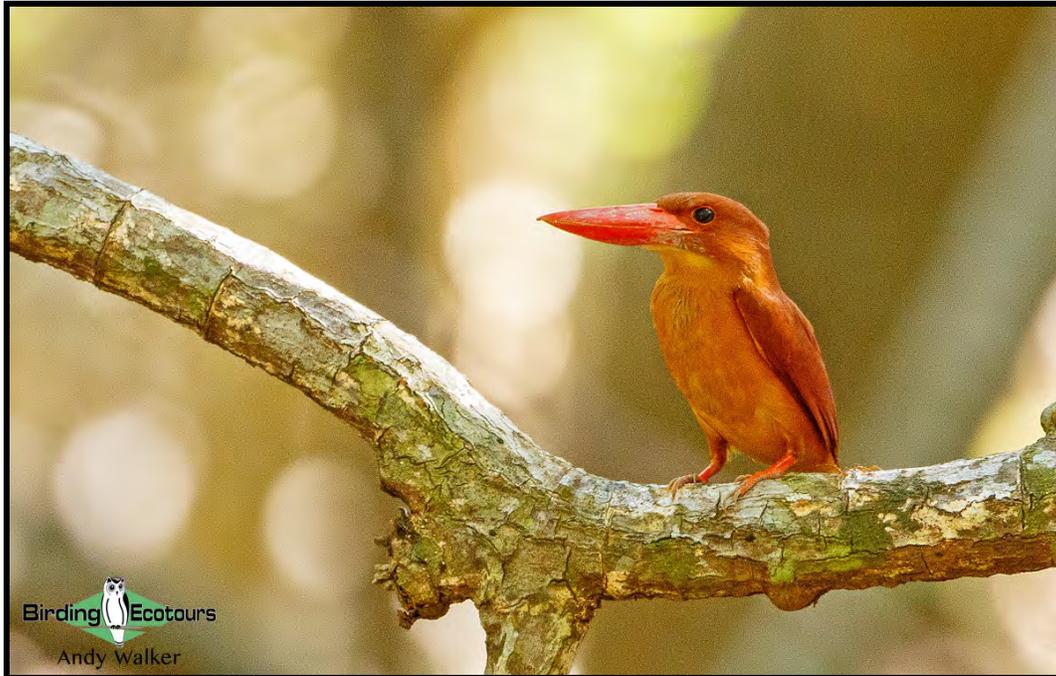
Due to the remote location and age of these islands a number of endemic birds have evolved here, and these are the main targets of the tour and will include **Andaman Teal, Andaman Nightjar, Andaman Coucal, Andaman Wood Pigeon, Andaman Cuckoo-Dove, Andaman Green Pigeon, Andaman Crane, Andaman Serpent Eagle, Andaman Masked Owl, Andaman Scops Owl, Hume's Hawk-Owl, Andaman Hawk-Owl, Andaman Woodpecker, Andaman Cuckooshrike, Andaman Drongo, Andaman Treepie, Andaman Bulbul, White-headed Starling, Andaman Shama, and Andaman Flowerpecker**. Pristine forest still remains in some areas, and we will spend the majority of our time in these areas, such as Chidiya Tapu and Mount Harriet National Park, where the vast majority of our endemic target birds occur. We will also be sure to visit other habitats, such as the Sippighat swamps, North Wandoor, and other locations where we will check waterbodies, swamps, mangrove forests, and mudflats for a wide assortment of birds.



*Another of our endemic targets is **Andaman Scops Owl** (photo M. Aggarwal).*

Other species we may see have distinct endemic subspecies that may warrant full species status in the future, such as **Oriental Scops Owl, Crested Serpent Eagle, Collared Kingfisher,**

Ruddy Kingfisher, Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher, Long-tailed Parakeet, Black-naped Oriole, Scarlet Minivet, and Indian White-eye to name a few, and there is an interesting range of Southeast Asian species possible too, such as **Violet Cuckoo, Greater Racket-tailed Drongo,** and **Red-breasted Parakeet,** with the island having an Indo-Malayan birdlife.



Ruddy Kingfisher is one of several stunning kingfishers we hope to see during the tour.

This Andaman Islands trip has been designed to run after our exciting **Birding Tour India: The South – Western Ghats and Nilgiri Endemics** or our **Birding Tour Sri Lanka: Island Endemics, Wintering Specialties, and Blue Whale Pelagic**, both of which occur immediately before this short tour. We have many other tours in India, with the full range of our trips shown **here** if you would like to continue your exploration of this incredibly interesting part of the world.

We can also arrange this trip to fit before or after any of our other India tours, though the costs for this may vary from the costs provided for the dates given here; please ask us.

Itinerary (5 days/4 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Port Blair

After your afternoon arrival in Port Blair following either our **Birding Tour India: The South – Western Ghats and Nilgiri Endemics** or our **Birding Tour Sri Lanka: Island Endemics, Wintering Specialties, and Blue Whale Pelagic** we commence our birding late in the afternoon

around Port Blair, where we will target our first endemic birds, potentially **Andaman Teal** and **Andaman Nightjar**. Then we will have a group welcome evening meal together and discuss our plans for the next few exciting and bird-filled days.

Overnight: Port Blair

Days 2 - 4. Birding Port Blair, Sippighat, Chidiya Tapu, North Wandoor, and Mount Harriet National Park

We will spend three full days (and two nights) visiting a range of pristine forested habitats such as Mt. Harriet and Chidiya Tapu, which each hold multiple endemics. We will also visit more open areas around Port Blair (like the Sippighat swamps) and Chidiya Tapu, where some time will be spent looking in the mangroves and mudflats for shorebirds and other coastal species.

Birding in this part of the world often involves searching for mixed feeding flocks, or bird waves. These flocks find you just as often as you find them, and in the Andaman Islands, similar to our tours in **Sri Lanka**, **Taiwan**, and **Borneo** where we often also see this phenomenon, the bird waves can contain many endemic birds. Species we will look for in a bird wave in the Mount Harriet area include **Andaman Drongo**, **White-headed Starling**, **Andaman Treepie**, **Andaman Flowerpecker**, and **Andaman Cuckooshrike**, as well as plenty of other species such as **Violet Cuckoo**, **Greater Racket-tailed Drongo**, **Scarlet Minivet**, and **Black-naped Monarch**. Soaring over the forest the endemic **Andaman Serpent Eagle** can be found, with other possible endemics including **Andaman Green Pigeon**, **Andaman Cuckoo-Dove**, and **Andaman Wood Pigeon**. As with pigeons and doves across other parts of Asia a knowledge of their roost sites is usually invaluable in getting views of them, as they can be secretive.



*We should find **Andaman Drongo** moving about in the forest bird waves as they search for prey flushed out by the flock's activity (photo M. Aggarwal).*



Typically for a serpent eagle, the **Andaman Serpent Eagle** spends a lot of time perched in the forest, so we hope for perched as well as flight views (photo M. Aggarwal).



The endemic **White-headed Starling** is a beautiful bird (photo M. Aggarwal).

Secretive in the extreme is the **Andaman Crane**. We hope to see this absolutely spectacular and tough forest-dwelling endemic during our time in suitable habitat. Other species possible skulking about on the forest floor include **Forest Wagtail** and **Orange-headed Thrush**, the

former a nonbreeding winter visitor, the latter a resident species (an endemic subspecies and possible future split).

Night birding in these forests is a must as the archipelago is home to a large species diversity of nocturnal avian predators, and although we might be lucky enough to find one or two of our targets on day roosts, we will likely need to spend some of our time searching at night for the likes of **Andaman Masked Owl**, **Andaman Scops Owl**, **Andaman Hawk-Owl**, **Hume's Hawk-Owl**, and **Andaman Nightjar**, five species of endemic night birds! Furthermore, we should not neglect trying to find **Oriental Scops Owl**; the endemic subspecies (*modestus*) occurring in the Andamans could be elevated to full species status and called Walden's Scops Owl in the future. So, it is definitely worth putting in the effort at night too. Luckily, it gets dark early, so often we can get a good owling session in before dinnertime!



Andaman Bulbul is fairly common but rather striking with its pale eye (photo M. Aggarwal).

Our accommodation for two nights is located in the Chidiya Tapu area, and the forest here supports more of our endemic targets, with spectacular species such as **Andaman Woodpecker** – a large, all-black *Dryocopus* woodpecker with striking scarlet crown, crest, and malar stripe and pale eyes – found nearby. Additionally, we should see **Andaman Coucal**, **Andaman Shama**, **Andaman Bulbul**, and **White-headed Starling**.

We will look for a range of widespread shorebirds from the East Asian – Australasian flyway, which could include **Terek Sandpiper**, **Greater Sand Plover**, **Lesser Sand Plover**, **Pacific Golden Plover**, **Great Knot**, **Oriental Pratincole**, **Red-necked Stint**, and **Long-toed Stint**.

Wetlands and mangrove forests near the coast could hold the endemic **Andaman Teal** along with **Watercock**, **Cinnamon Bittern**, **Yellow Bittern**, **Grey-headed Swamphen**, **Slaty-breasted Rail**, **Baillon's Crane**, **Ruddy-breasted Crane**, **Mangrove Whistler**, **Stork-billed**

Kingfisher, Ruddy Kingfisher, and Collared Kingfisher along with several overwintering migrants such as **Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler**.

Overnight Days 2 and 3: Chidiya Tapu

Overnight Day 4: Port Blair



Baillon's Crake is a winter visitor to the Andamans, and we hope to see them during the tour.

Day 5. Departure from Port Blair

We will depart from Port Blair today back to the Indian mainland and continuation with your onward travel or further touring. Our other Indian tours are shown **here** for reference, and we can easily arrange an additional birding, wildlife-watching, or cultural tour.

Overnight: Not included

Please note that the itinerary cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides and other factors. In addition, we sometimes have to use a different international guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling.

Duration:	5 days
Group Size:	4 - 8
Dates:	23 - 27 January 2023 22 - 26 January 2024
Start:	Port Blair, Andaman and Nicobar Islands
End:	Port Blair, Andaman and Nicobar Islands
Prices:	US\$2,175 per person sharing – based on 4 - 8 participants (2023) US\$2,393 per person sharing – based on 4 - 8 participants (2024)
Single Supplements:	US\$355 (2023) US\$390 (2024)

Price includes:

All accommodation (as described above)
Meals (from dinner on day 1 until breakfast on day 5)
Drinking water – two bottles of mineral water per day per person from our tour vehicle, please bring a refillable water bottle (if taken from the hotel this will be at your own cost)
Expert tour leader
Local bird and wildlife guide fees
National park/birdwatching reserve entrance fees
All ground transport and tolls while on tour, including airport pick-up and drop-off

Price excludes:

Flights to/from Port Blair Airport
Visa and entry permit
Items of a personal nature, e.g. gifts, laundry, internet access, phone calls, etc.
Optional tours (e.g. monument entrance fees and associated additional travel expenses)
Any pre- or post-tour accommodation, meals, or birding/sightseeing/monument excursions
Soft/alcoholic drinks
Camera (still/video) permits
Personal travel insurance
Gratuities